United States Army
Criminal Investigation Command

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CID Special Agent becomes permanent part of science

Fort Belvoir, VA - Chet Lemanski, assigned to the Philadelphia Fraud Resident Agency, Mid-Atlantic Fraud Field Office, was recently honored by having a newly identified and described mineral species named after him.

Lemanski has had a near life-long interest in mineralogy, starting in his early teens. He actually worked as a hard rock miner at the former Sterling zinc mine in Ogdensburg, NJ, before entering the military in 1966. His collecting activities were placed on hold throughout most of his military career but the bug that bit him early on, returned in 1984, prior to his retirement from active duty.

The beginnings of Lemanskiite (pronounced - le man'ski ite) came when Lemanski observed consistent discrepancies in the existing literature for a mineral named Lavendulan, in allusion to the lavender color of the original specimen estimated to be from 1828. The stated physical properties varied from author to author and were indicative of the existence of two chemically identical but crystallographically different minerals, varying in density, unit cell structure, X-ray diffraction values, and other properties. Material from Chile, purported to be Lavendulan, appeared unique enough to warrant scientific investigation and was submitted to mineralogists at the Czech Geological Survey, Prague.

The ensuing scientific investigation, which lasted almost five years and required the work of several experts in the field, substantiated the existence of the two mineral species with identical chemical composition and the newly defined species was named in honor of Lemanski.

"I was elated," said Lemanski, recalling how he felt when he got the call that the mineral would be named after him.

"Very few individuals get this honor … I'm honored that they felt I was worthy … I'm lucky."

According to Lemanski, pieces of Lemanskiite have been found in Chile, Spain and Iran.

Lemanski has become known worldwide for his activities in the furtherance of the science of mineralogy. Classified as an advanced amateur mineralogist, he has served as the President of the Franklin-Ogdensburg Mineralogical Society in New Jersey, former Vice President and current board member of the Franklin Mineral Museum, Franklin, NJ, and as one of several manager/monitors of the largest online mineralogy and mineral occurrence Web sites, www.Mindat.org.

Lemanski has built one of the largest privately held systematic mineral species collections and an accompanying geoscience reference library since his re-entry into the hobby. He regularly attends some of the largest and most prestigious mineralogy-related events, including the Rochester Mineralogical Symposium, the annual Tucson gem and mineral shows, and other similar events.

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Mineral species are defined by a unique chemical and crystallographic set of properties. There are only some 4,100 verified mineral species identified to date, including those found in meteorites and on the moon during the Apollo missions.

A naturally occurring mineral has a fixed chemical composition, with minor variations for impurities that may substitute for essential elemental components. Composition alone is not enough. To qualify as a separate species, the substance must also have a definable set of crystallographic properties. Such is the case with Lemanskiite.

It is a very rare and distinct honor for a non-professional to have a mineral named after them. Many minerals are named for professional mineralogists, crystallographers, physicists, chemists, royalty, curators, mine owners, and collectors who find new species, often posthumously. Many others are named from the Greek in allusion to their physical properties, or after the localities from which they are first described. There are only about 300 individuals alive today who have been so honored.

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